



Maryland Judiciary COVID-19 Timeline of Events

Date	Action Taken by the Judiciary
March 12, 2020	<p>Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera issues two administrative orders – Statewide Suspension of Non-Essential Judicial Activities due to Emergency and Statewide Suspension of Jury Trials. These orders balance the need for courts to remain operational with the health and safety of employees and court visitors and include restricting non-essential functions of the Judiciary such as travel, training, and in-person committee meetings; provide for the remote electronic participation of hearings; and suspend jury trials scheduled between March 16, 2020, to April 3, 2020.</p>
March 2020	<p>Judge Laura Ripken, Administrative Judge for the Fifth Judicial Circuit and Chair of the Conference of Circuit Judges, begins a series of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Skype calls with the circuit administrative judges as well as the State Court Administrator, Chair of the Conference of Circuit Court Clerks, and the Chair of the Conference of Court Administrators.</p> <p>Chief Judge John Morrissey, Chief Judge of the District Court, also begins a series of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Skype calls with the administrative judges for each of the twelve districts that comprise the leadership of the District Court. These calls for both the Circuit Courts and District Court are to discuss best practices, share new and ongoing concerns, and explore new and technology driven approaches to expand the Judiciary’s ability to conduct additional court business.</p> <p>Administrative judges in both the Circuit Courts and District Court continue to review the list of those individuals currently incarcerated and reach out to their local jails, police, state’s attorneys, public defenders, and local departments of health to work collaboratively to address the pandemic. To date, the courts have conducted multiple re-reviews of detainees, on a case-by-case basis, to ensure that only those individuals that represent an unacceptable risk to public safety remain in the detention centers.</p>
March 13, 2020	<p>Chief Judge Barbera issues an administrative order Statewide Closing of the Courts to the Public Due to the COVID-19 Emergency. This order closes the courthouses to the public effective March 16, 2020, through April 3, 2020, except for emergency matters. Court locations and offices are minimally staffed to only hear emergency court matters and answer calls until April 3, 2020. Emergency matters include, but are not limited to, domestic violence petitions, family law emergencies, extreme risk protective orders, bail reviews, juvenile detention hearings, and search warrants. All other non-emergency matters will be postponed.</p>
March 16, 2020	<p>The Court of Appeals issues an administrative order: Court of Appeals Emergency Rules Meeting to Consider the 204th Report of the Rules Committee. This order provides for the Court of Appeals to consider on March 16, 2020, the 204th Report which proposes new rules</p>

<p>March 16, 2020 (cont.)</p>	<p>describing the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals’ administrative authority during an emergency. The Court of Appeals holds an open meeting on March 16, 2020 and unanimously approves the proposed rules.</p> <p>Chief Judge Barbera issues a new administrative order on Statewide Judiciary Restricted Operations Due to the COVID-19 Emergency. Effective March 17, 2020, the Maryland Judiciary requires <i>essential</i> employees only to report to courthouse locations and offices while non-essential employees are to work remotely. Court locations and offices are staffed to hear emergency court matters and answer calls until April 3, 2020, when the courts are scheduled to reopen to the public.</p>
<p>March 17, 2020</p>	<p>The Court of Appeals postpones oral arguments scheduled in April: Postponing April Oral Arguments in the Court of Appeals. Chief Judge Barbera also issues an administrative order authorizing the administration of attorney oaths by the clerk of the court by telephone during a proceeding held in open court at the Court of Appeals, with safeguards taken to assure the identity of the person being sworn: Administration of the Attorney Oath during the COVID-19 Emergency.</p>
<p>March 18, 2020</p>	<p>Chief Judge Barbera issues an administrative order Statewide Operations That Must be Maintained during the COVID-19 Emergency: Land Records and Suspension of Foreclosures and Evictions during the COVID-19 Emergency. These orders require land record transaction filings to continue to be recorded in the circuit courts’ clerk’s offices and stays (suspends) orders to foreclose residential properties and rights of redemption of tax sales of residential properties, or to evict from residential rental properties during the COVID-19 emergency period. New residential foreclosures, foreclosures of right of redemption after a tax sale, and evictions may be filed but those new filings are stayed and will not begin until the courts resume normal operations or otherwise notified.</p> <p>Chief Judge Morrissey issues a Policy on Interim Orders during the Emergency which dictates the process for new protective, peace, and extreme risk protective order petitions and interim orders.</p>
<p>March 20, 2020</p>	<p>Chief Judge Barbera issues administrative order Remote Hearings Held during the COVID-19 Emergency. This order authorizes courts to hear emergency and other matters remotely.</p>
<p>March 23, 2020</p>	<p>Chief Judge Barbera releases a video update message to the legal community.</p>
<p>March 25, 2020</p>	<p>Chief Judge Barbera issues two administrative orders Extending the Length of Statewide Judiciary Restricted Operations due to the COVID-19 Emergency and Suspension During the COVID-19 Emergency of Foreclosures, Evictions, and Other Ejectments Involving Residences. These orders extend the court closures to May 1, 2020, and provide that foreclosures of residential property, foreclosures of the right to redeem residential property sold in a tax sale, residential evictions, and executions on residential real property under levy or lien are stayed and new or pending types of these actions will be accepted but not proceed during this time.</p>

<p>March 27, 2020</p>	<p>Chief Judge Barbera issues the Administrative Order on Permissive Use of the MDEC System for Appellate Filings during the COVID-19 Emergency. This order provides that counsel and self-represented parties who are registered users of the MDEC system may file, in new and pending matters before the Court of Appeals and Court of Special Appeals, all papers through the MDEC system originating in Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County, those jurisdictions where MDEC has not yet been implemented.</p> <p>Chief Judge Morrissey issues a Revised Policy on Interim Orders during the Emergency pursuant to Chief Judge Barbera's order of March 25, 2020, extending the length of restricted court operations. This policy dictates the process for new protective, peace, and extreme risk protective order petitions and interim orders.</p> <p>The Judiciary also issues a Statement from the Maryland Judiciary concerning Children and Families to clarify the concerns of those families with court orders in family matters during the emergency.</p>
<p>March 31, 2020</p>	<p>The Court of Appeals issues an administrative order Rescheduling April Oral Arguments and Postponing May Oral Arguments in the Court of Appeals. This order reschedules the April oral arguments before the Court of Appeals to May 12 and May 13, 2020, postpones the oral arguments scheduled for May 2020, and invites litigants, whose matters have been postponed, to request, pursuant to Maryland Rule 8-523(a)(2), that their appeals be considered on the briefs filed without argument.</p> <p>Chief Judge Barbera releases a video to Maryland judges and Judiciary personnel regarding their work and service during the pandemic.</p>
<p>April 3, 2020</p>	<p>Chief Judge Barbera issues two new administrative orders Expanding the Statewide Suspension of Jury Trials and Suspending Grand Juries and Emergency Tolling or Suspension of Statutes of Limitations and Statutory Rules and Deadlines and revises existing order Expanding Statewide Judiciary Restricted Operations due to the COVID-19 Emergency. These orders toll or suspend statutory and rule deadlines related to the initiation of court matters effective March 16, 2020, as well as all statutes and rules deadlines to hear pending matters, suspends all jury trials until further notice including grand juries. The latter order expands the courts' ability to handle certain proceedings remotely and permits those jurisdictions that do not have electronic filing capabilities through MDEC to do so using new virtual drop boxes.</p> <p>The Court of Special Appeals hears oral arguments remotely for the first time during the emergency.</p>
<p>April 7, 2020</p>	<p>Chief Judge Barbera issues an updated administrative order Administration of the Attorney Oath.</p>

April 8, 2020	Chief Judge Barbera revises two existing administrative orders Amended Administrative Order on Emergency Tolling or Suspension of Statutes of Limitations and Statutory and Rules Deadlines and Amended Administrative Order on Expanding Statewide Judiciary Restricted Operation due to the COVID-19 Emergency . These orders provide that all statutory and rules deadlines to initiate matters, including statute of limitations, as well as the deadlines to hear pending matters shall be tolled or suspended effective March 16, 2020, by the number of days that the courts are closed to the public, plus length of time to file after reopening to be determined by later order and expands the types of emergency matters the courts are required to be heard on an emergency basis and expands the courts' authorization to hear remotely.
April 13, 2020	Chief Judge Barbera issues an administrative order Guiding the Response of Circuit Courts Sitting as Juvenile Courts to the COVID-19 Emergency . This order addresses juveniles who are detained and committed pending placement or in commitment.
April 14, 2020	Chief Judge Barbera issues a new administrative order Guiding the Response of the Trial Courts of Maryland to the COVID-19 Emergency and revises an existing order Second Amended Administrative Order Expanding and Extending Statewide Judiciary Restricted Operations Due to the COVID-19 Emergency . The new order guides the response of the trial courts in Maryland regarding individuals who are incarcerated or imprisoned, and the amended order extends the closure of the courts to the public with limited exceptions for certain emergency court matters through June 5, 2020 .
April 23, 2020	The Maryland Judiciary issues a new video on Court Resources and Tools for the Public during COVID-19.
April 24, 2020	Chief Judge Barbera issues an administrative order Clarifying the Emergency Tolling or Suspension of Statutes of Limitations and Statutory Rules Deadlines . This clarifies that ordering the suspension of filing deadlines to initiate matters shall be applied consistently and equitably, and no party or parties shall be compelled to prove his, her, its, or their practical inability to comply with such a deadline if it occurred during the COVID-19 emergency.
April 28, 2020	The Court of Appeals revises an existing administrative order Amended Administrative Order on Rescheduling April Oral Arguments and Postponing May Oral Arguments in the Court of Appeals . This order provides that April oral arguments before the Court of Appeals are rescheduled to May 11, 12, and 13, 2020, cause having been found to conduct the hearings outside the city limits of Annapolis (to be conducted remotely), by virtue of the COVID-19 pandemic, with May oral arguments continuing to be postponed and a date to be set.

April and May 2020	The Maryland Judiciary continues to request, receive and deploy Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks, protective gloves, face shields, no contact thermometers, hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes, Plexiglas sneeze guards, signage and six-foot separation markers, from MEMA and outside vendors.
May 1, 2020	Chief Judge Barbera issues a new administrative order and revises two existing administrative orders Case Time Standards and Related Reports for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 in Light of the COVID-19 Emergency , Third Amended Administrative Order Expanding and Extending Statewide Judiciary Restricted Operations Due to the COVID-19 Emergency , and Amended Administrative Order on Remote Proceedings Held during the COVID-19 Emergency . These orders provide that case time standards shall be suspended for cases reaching a conclusion in the Circuit Courts and District Court between March 16, 2020, and December 31, 2020, and that application of time standards will resume January 1, 2021, adds language referring to the Case Time Standards order in the Restricted Operations order and provides that approval from the State Court Administrator on various technology platforms is waived, but that platforms determined to pose an unacceptable risk to state networks are not to be used and courts using such communication platforms are to migrate to one that does not.
May 4, 2020	<p>Chief Judge Barbera revises two existing administrative orders Amended Administrative Order Further Clarifying the Emergency Tolling or Suspension of Statutes of Limitations and Statutory Rules and Deadlines and Fourth Amended Administrative Order Expanding and Extending Statewide Judiciary Restricted Operations due to the COVID-19 Emergency. These orders clarify that all deadlines to initiate a case or an appeal and hearing deadlines for pending cases are tolled or suspended effective March 16, 2020, and adds a reference to this revised order to the existing order that restricts operations.</p> <p>Chief Judge Barbera releases a video to Maryland Judiciary judges and court staff regarding their work and service during the pandemic and information about the reopening process.</p> <p>The Maryland Judiciary issues a Statement concerning Guardianships of Adults and Minors. This statement provides guidance on guardianships to protect vulnerable adults or minors during the COVID-19 emergency.</p>
May 5, 2020	Chief Judge Morrissey issues a Revised Policy on Interim Orders during the Emergency which provides that interim and temporary orders will remain in effect until action is taken by the court.
May 6, 2020	Chief Judge Morrissey issues a Communication Regarding Domestic Violence Protective Orders, Peace Orders and Extreme Risk Protective Orders which provides that all pending interim and temporary protective, peace, and extreme risk protective orders will remain in effect (even if the date has passed on the order) until such time that the court has conducted a hearing or has otherwise communicated with the parties.
May 7, 2020	Chief Judge Barbera, Judge Ripken, Chief Judge Morrissey, and State Court Administrator Pam Harris, with other criminal justice partners, participate in a virtual briefing before the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the courts and the criminal justice system.

May 13, 2020	Clerks of the Circuit Courts expand issuance of marriage licenses during the emergency with revised Marriage License application and Marriage License Application Instructions .
May 14, 2020	Chief Judge Morrissey briefs the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Workgroup on Residential Property and COVID-19.
May 15, 2020	Chief Judge Morrissey issues a Communication regarding Affidavit Judgments .
Ongoing efforts and communications	<p>The Maryland Judiciary has maintained ongoing communication with the Maryland Department of Health, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Juvenile Services, the Department of General Services, the Maryland State Bar Association and the Governor’s Office of Legal Counsel. On a local level, administrative judges are working with state’s attorneys, public defenders, private defense counsel, the sheriff’s departments, detention centers, local bar associations, and other justice partners. Judicial leadership on a local level have also been attending “town hall” meetings with their local bar associations.</p> <p>Workgroups have been formed in both the District Court and Circuit Courts to review and address best practices and strategies when the time comes to safely re-open or phase in additional court functions.</p> <p>Through online chat and phone services, the Self-help Center has remained open throughout the emergency and provide free remote legal advice to those that have civil legal needs.</p> <p>The Maryland Judiciary website www.mdcourts.gov is updated daily with information related to the Judiciary’s efforts with regards to the COVID-19 emergency. This includes a webpage with links to local court information and orders, a webpage for the public, with information and available resources and tools translated into six languages, and webpages for administrative orders and news releases.</p>